

*Eros in Poetry
and Prose: Book Five*



by

Patrick Bruskiewich

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Eros in Poetry and Prose

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Cover: *Something DaDa* by the author

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He had a love / hate relationship with woman, sometimes seeing them as goddesses and sometime not. He had many lovers in his life and fathered several children. He could not walk past a pretty woman without stopping to flirt with them. There are several books about Picasso and a famous movie Life with Picasso, based on a book by one of his lovers.

Sophie on Picasso

The Eros in Poetry and Prose Series

Eros in literature is one of the finest and most sublime way to share one's love.

The purpose of the ***Eros in Poetry and Prose*** Series is to share some of the most amorous and enticing pieces of poetry and prose to be found in the English Language.

This is the fifth book in the series. Its release coincides with Valentine's Day 2019.

In this edition you will find original poems and pieces of prose all meant to tickle your fancy ...

Enjoy!

Patrick Bruskiewich

Vancouver, BC, Canada

POETRY

The Cat Lept Off by Patrick Bruskiewich

The pussy sat on her lap
It purred as she stroke it
Forth and back, and then she tapped
To keep the pussy happy. Sit!
It wanted to sit. Stay
But it would not. It grew
Warm to her touch. She played
awhile. It purred softly. Knew
she its buttons, its nose. Whiskers too and fro.
She softly pawed, fanged but could not stop.
She squirmed, meowed, but could not go
As, she was content to be a top.
She ran her fingers to and fro some more.
The cat shuddered. She lept off
Not once, not twice, she did keep score
A perfect count, but could not get enough.

Star by Kylin Li

Anxiously sitting in a car
yelling *drive quicker, quicker!*
In my hand, holding a star
on the card, a sparking sticker
written with *To my dear little brother.*

The house turning into my sight.
Asking my mom where he slept
The room was quiet, with not much light
first sight on the crib, he was asleep.
Kissing his forehead, waiting beside,

my little angel, he finally woke up.
Our first eye contact made baby cry, soon mother came
Patting him hoping he would continue his nap.
Mommy's lovely voice, softly calling his name—
a warm hug from her was all he needed.

After a while, laying in mommy's arms, the baby boy
stopped crying and started to laugh.
Within his hand a little star-shaped toy
held tightly, just like his precious giraffe
These toys were (now) placed in his very secret box—

A small paper bag, carried round him close.
He believed that secrets would not be taken,
after they had been put into his bag. Although most
were lost, not by others, the toys were forgotten,
by the little boy, after another interesting thing

had been found...

Like Strong Coffee by Patrick Bruskiewich

In this world, unknown
the real becomes surreal,
normal becomes absurd
nothing is what it seems!
To live in this world,
the possible becomes the impossible
the truth, anything but ...
you try to hide from reality,
To escape all your thoughts
Then something strawberry appears!
Soft, sweet and succulent
Paris' match – Gaulique!
Like strong coffee ... a cup
Petite yet not so fragile.
Everything has changed, here
is something I wish known
You try to hide
from your thoughts,
but all you can imagine
is sugar and spice ...

The Majestic Beauty of Womanhood by Patrick Bruskiewich

In the tree's shadow ...
Close your eyes and imagine all
Am I your Adam, a pear green?
Eve savour the taste after the fall.
No shame for what we have been
For hidden beneath the outer sight
under layers, much layers of soft cloth
is that what draws us towards the light
like twilight's flighty, violent moths.
The string that binds your shame
lay tangled, naughty, moving still.
This time will pass, do then beware
is this what you wish or will?
Venture I into the valley below
and climb glacier's high
peel back the skin that glows
of crimson flush and do we sigh.
We are at heaven's gate
Glance back, peer forward, stand proud
Our patience melts, we cannot wait
We cannot live atop a cloud.
Step us then out of paradise
To slip the bounds of our regrets
and uncover what is so nice.
Lay you down upon your dress.
Let my finger tips caress with leisure
the wholeness of you, from toe to head

and your body now flush with pleasure
will fill with warm perfume our soft bed
Where is hid the body's lair, its treasure?
Let me trace out the geometry of your curves
let ascending breath set the measure,
the gauge, the crackle, the current of electric nerve
My moist tongue will kiss both lips
Those painted pink, and those pinked dreamed
And suckle at your hidden tips
that little boy, less hidden seemed.
And split the fruit, to plant the seed,
but first furrow, the fertile and the soft.

[When I Was Growing Up by Kylin Li](#)

When I was growing up,
as a kid, with my grandma,
calling her name once in a while,
worried that she might forget me,
along the trees, these leaves
of the Chinese toon, placed in my
bucket, with mulberry laying beside.

When I was growing up,
as a kid, with my grandma,
fishing beside the river, in the park.

She and I put on the fishing bait
together. We listened to the sound,
the waves crashed onto the beach
the fishes struggled in the bucket.

When I was growing up,
as a kid, with my grandma,
the pancophonous¹ kitchen, she stands still,
like a great hero at war. Her hands,
change those odd foods, into dainties
and these motive me to cook.

When I was growing up,
as a kid, with my grandma,
I was lucky, to have her
like that.

pancophonous¹: the cacophony made out of pots and pan.

[She is the Minatrice by Patrick Bruskiewich](#)

Her eyes are verdant green,
As was her succulent soul.
Looking at her, she did not seem
so outgoing, to be so bold.
Yet by her actions, bold she was...

not held back, and brash as well.
What appetites! Pray, what does
she – what faint heart can tell.
She stalks the moon lit night
and seeks, as she must, new prey.
She longs until things are set right
then is transformed until the day.
Her crimson lips seek onto all
As she keeps you, her catch, so close
Her soft, hunger is your fall ...
before long she somehow grows.
She knows all there is about you.
She folds your precious petals back
Devouring your hidden truth, too
private to be shared ... yet nothing lacks.
She is the Minatrice, half-lust
Half-love, ready to die
or be consumed. She offers, she must.
Unsuspecting, you cannot look in her eyes.
What does he see, but her soft lips
Perhaps her bare femality
Entranced is he by inviting hips
He does not sense familiarity
Of what she is ... half beast
Ready to feast ... to sup
To take from him the least
That he is prepared to give up.

As he lays with her, he does not sense
the grave danger he is in, not a breath.
She smothers him with her presence
until he is wrapped and clothed by death.
Then she finishes off her feast
She draws apart his limbs, one by one
He feels nothing, he is asleep
The pain, one fast slice ... he comes
And so the Minatrice is satisfied.

[From Behind the Moon by Patrick Bruskiewich](#)

The moon ... the half moon
appears from behind
its pink, silky cloud
Little by little, it opens up
one quarter here,
the other full across
Then it rises slowly
Hiding, sly ... and shy
from behind the moon
This little man ...
the boy in her moon
rises and peeks out
She feels happy
and wants to play

It is her lunacy.

goodbye by Cindy Xu

i want to say goodbye
to a place i never could
cause home is where i left my heart
and maybe i never should've
i can map it out from edge to edge
i know it like the back of my hand
all i am is here in this city
i'm still trying to understand
this place called home - i've grown so attached
devising a dream
on i turn time back
are you afraid? cause i am
i'm so stuck in the past
i want to say goodbye
so that i can grow at last.

The Tuscan Women Know by Patrick Bruskiewich

Beyond the trees, set rows
away from the tortuous sun
the Tuscan women know

to wait, for they who come.
The threshing's 'nere over
The dry hay heaped, pile high
Tired men return sombre
From the endless fields, bye
the bye, our drink await us.
Come our wilful mates
with us into the shade, lust
we for that that cannot wait.
What could be worst, the burden
we carry in our heavy pouch,
or the sun that seeks to murder
us? Snatch we our lunch.
Set us back. Feed us your pears,
sweet figs, plums and apricots. Come
be happy with us. Lay us bare and
wipe our brow clean, 'til we be done.
Then let us sleep our dreams,
head set upon soft pillows.
And know what pleasure means
Watching clouds above us billow.
Our toil can wait 'till
the afternoon is near set.
Hide us behind your hills ...
let dry our sweat.
Far as we can see
restore us by your pleasure

Esrt happy we shall be
to sleep deep within our treasure.

Love is Like a Tender Flower by Patrick Bruskiewich

Love is like a tender flower
that sits quietly as it
awaits the morning sun.

It is something majestic
like a tower that beckons
us to climb up to heaven
to leave behind our
mortal sins, and think
of angels and godly things.

It is a flower, soft and pink
Sometimes fragrant,
sometimes sullen –
but always waiting for warmth.

Love are words, spoke soft
To someone dear that
Echo deep within their
Soul, and speak of
Timeless truths ...

About happiness and longing,
about beauty and the sublime ...
about strawberries and champagne.

It is dark chocolate smothered
In vanilla, covered in
Crushed hazelnuts and
Cinnamon pixie dust.

And when the flowers are warm to touch
... true love has arrived.

[another one for zero by Cindy Xu](#)

oh my dear,
i'd do it all again
because in fairytales and movies
it begins with the end
our chaotic love story is a heartbreak hotel
for post-lovers with aching chests
that they can't seem to dispel
though you've left my heart all battered and cut
you are my favorite chapter of my favorite book
that I can't seem to shut
so tell me, when you say you'd love me once more

were you ditzy nostalgic? or did you mean it
for sure

[Her Heavy Metal Casket by Patrick Bruskiewich](#)

I met her only once. It was real heavy
metal music ... and the party
it was loud, crowded, dark.

I was half-stoned, my angel
was too ... tall ... peroxide, she
had sparkling green eyes. Couldn't be
more than eighteen at that. Crazy
with lust and life. It was knarly
her narcissism. She hardly
wore anything. Psychodel ...
is us ... it was! ... but she popped pills,
blue ones, green ones, red ones too!

... And she pouted at me for not joining her.
but I was high enough with life.

I grabbed her breast, and made my move,
but she pushed me away ... she was too high for love!
What could I do but keep my feet on the earth.
The loudness wore me out, so did her mad mirth

until in the early hours of the morn
she came crashing down ... her ...
and her bag of blues, and greens and reds ...
I held her close... but gone was her warmth and sparkle.

I did see her breasts ... while they tried to resuscitate her.
beautiful they were ...

... now only touched by the mortician
as he laid her into her heavy metal casket.

[The End of My Innocence by Patrick Bruskiewich](#)

Everything seems so crisp and clear
as I sit and watch the sea grass sway
in the afternoon breeze. Above I hear
the passage of birds made of steel – away
they fly! The beach sand glistens in the sun –
it sparkles in fact, bringing clarity to my
thoughts. Every grain represents an idea, some
bright and better than other thoughts ... by
now I should be able to decide, bottom or top?
– submit to the light or let it dominate you.
The wind will whistle – the other shoe will drop,
the matter will seem less clear – what to do?
Does free will exist, or are matters preordained? Then

the grass begins to sway a new, and here I am
in the here and now. The tingle returns, it throbs, can
I say no to her? She sits pretty. Min is the end
of my innocence. The tree above me is covered in moss.
The clouds drift by as if to mock is their reason ...
a ship passes leaving the port behind ... loss
is not what I fear. It is the unknown. It's the treason
to my long held view, that I am a truly free man.

[The Creative Vessel of the Human Mind by Wing Wing Fung](#)

our ability to design,
to create, and imagine a reality
that is only true to us.
what are visual senses
perceive is often differed
from the reality of what we see.
for it is thoughts that create
our perception of reality.
with our eyes closed,
we can imagine another dimension,
a world, built on ideas seen
and exposed to once before,
or flowery experiences
that have been carefully dissected
to ease into a chamber of our minds.

that is the kind's own ability
to mentally hallucinate
a comforting altered form of a stress
reducing haven that we can hide to.
we often imagine and day dream
when we are not fully in the present.

could it be at the silent contemplations
of those hours we are alone,
looking forward to yesterday's
overstimulation of reality?

[A Floating City in the Sky by Patrick Bruskiewich](#)

The happy Empress Min,
she watches the setting sun,
her hair blowing in the wind.
The fall of dusk had begun.

The western sky is pink,
and purple, and orange too,
as the sun begins to sink
behind the mountain tops. Soon

her sky will fill with stars,
but not before the clouds

float above her earth, bars
of pillowed softness, proud

reminders that this place is
set beneath the heavens, far
from the twinkling stars, this
oasis of earthly paradise.

A majestic cloud billows there,
a floating city in the sky.
She imagines then without a care,
that in her dreams, bye the bye ...

She soon will too be sitting
way up there looking down
from her floating city
at us set fast on the ground.

We will be looking up at her
and see her beautiful breasts,
the nape of her lovely neck, soft fur
sa source de vie, and all the rest.

And say of her that no
Empress is better bound
to heaven than Min, who
in her softness is found

the feminine, the silk folds,
the pink petals, the ecstasy
of love and of life ... behold
all that draws her beauty.

Then the sun sets, the sky
darkens, the stars appear, she
smiles. She knows why
it is that she is so happy ...

[Walking Primates by Patrick Bruskiewich](#)

Oh, time marches on
I know we live but few years,
and fewer still young.

At length we all find
a way through our complex lives,
simple thoughts to live by.

We believe we grow up,
the silly philosophies we
choose keep us childlike,

we're just too smug

to see our self for what we
are – walking primates,

We should have stayed
up in the trees where we belong.
swinging happily!

Monkey see, monkey
do – small wonder we still like
Bananas ... hah!

[It Came And Silently Crept by Patrick Bruskiewich](#)

While we quietly slept,
it came and silently crept
upon us. We did not hear
its arrival – its fall. I fear
my day has come to a stop,
and so back into bed I flop.

Were I a child, free to play
then I could enjoy this day,
throw snowballs, and snowmen make
or if a girl – snow angels. But I take
the bus to work – if it can
trudge up the hill ... damn.

Maybe I should call and say
with the snow and all, there is no way
for me to get down there,
and stay in bed, without a care
here on this white mountain top.

And hope the snow ...
it does not stop!

[She Was Happy to Wait Awhile, Yet by Patrick Bruskiewich](#)

She stood there, a blank canvas
In her simple blouse and black jeans
at the precipice of it all. She was unaware.
She had no care. Everything was simple.

But as I admired her
I could see the beauty of her
not so well hidden away
and soon to be seen. It was like
standing before a basket of
ripening fruit, of pears, figs and apricots
knowing that soon there will be a day
when the fruit would be sweet and
succulent – ready to be enjoyed.

Oh ... would I be the one
To draw, to paint, to sculpt her
To bite into that fruit and
Savour the taste of it, its touch,
Its feel and have its nectar
Run down my chin. Were I ...

To kiss its softness and watch
The blush of it all, and know
That she too enjoyed the orchard
Of life, the basket and the fruit ...
Its love and happiness ...

She stood there, a blank canvas
and smiled. She was happy
to wait awhile, yet ...

PROSE

Early that summer I tumbled into a remarkable friendship with a new neighbor named Paige. Later that summer I went to art school at the Art Gallery down town and met my Mona Lisa. It was a busy summer that year.

Let me tell you about Paige. Paige lived just around the corner from where I grew up. I met her one day as she played on the trampoline in her back yard. I was walking down the back lane one afternoon when I heard the comical

Boing-

Boing-

Boing

of her jumping on her trampoline and so when I said hello a head with pony tails suddenly appeared for a split second above the fence line. She bounced around for another few minutes as she chatted with me then she suddenly stopped her trampoline play.

She asked me in and we got to know each other better as we bounced together up and down on her trampoline.

Boing-

Boing-

Boing

It was only when I heard my mother call my name that I reluctantly returned home that afternoon. Paige was the second person that I had chosen to become a friend with, the first being the beautiful girl who was buried with my teddy bear.

As I struck a friendship with Paige I wondered where it would lead us. She was lonely and happy to meet me, and took full advantage of our friendship. Paige was an only child. Her mother was a nurse who worked night shifts at Edmonton General Hospital and her father was a traveling salesman who was away most of the time. What he sold I can't remember, probably pumps or pipes or something like that because he was always away in the oil patch of Alberta.

There were very few young children in our neighborhood and Paige's mother did not let her leave the confines of her back yard. That summer I got to spend some fun time with Paige. She had interesting things to play with in her back yard, and in her room. I found out that she was ambidextrous and very flexible to boot.

One hot summer afternoon I came by to visit Paige and we ran through a sprinkler in her back yard, her in her bathing suit and me, well, not having a bathing suit, in my underwear. I don't know if it was the hot sun or the fresh grass clippings but in short order I started to have trouble breathing and started to panic and cry. I have always had bad asthma which even today can sneak up on me and cause concern.

Lucky for me that summer afternoon Paige's mother, the nurse, was home and so I was rushed inside, into the cold and dark kitchen and when my asthma didn't abate was set in short order into a cold bath, this time without my underwear. I just couldn't stop crying, which was making my trouble breathing even more difficult. I was turning bright red, but luckily for me not bright blue.

When Paige's mother had to step out of the bathroom for a moment to answer the telephone, Paige was left to look after me. I don't know why she decided to do this, but she took it upon herself to join me in the bath. Off came her bathing suit and well as she stepped into the bath with me I suddenly stopped crying and took my first deep breath in perhaps five minutes. As she stepped into the bath tub she was a perfect Aphrodite, even with the sun burn which delineated her body into public and private parts.

Then Paige sat there in front of me quite immodestly. She started to cup her hands and pour cold water over my head. My panic and anxiety melted away with every delicious trickle of that cold water. It melted away as I watched for the first time the blossoming of a most remarkable pink rose. It melted away as my manometer recorded that my blood pressure was returning to normal. In perhaps a minute or two my breathing went back to normal. With Paige looking out for me I no longer felt anxious nor scared.

I learnt two lessons that day; first that the human form is beautiful and second to not panic when you are in trouble, try to stay as calm as you can. It was perhaps my anxiety that I might choke and die that was causing me problems breathing up to the moment she joined me in the cool bath. It must have also been my awe in seeing the beauty of her form that served to calm me down.

When Paige's mother returned, she found the two of us laughing and taking turns cupping our hands and pouring the delicious cold water over our heads. She got angry at her daughter but Paige held her ground. "He is my friend ... and look he isn't crying anymore." I must have given Paige's mother the most innocent eyes

sitting there immodestly in the bath. I was perhaps the first boy Paige had ever seen and well she had seen it all, and she had helped me to feel better. Paige's mother did insist that she turn around so that her back was to me, which Paige didn't mind doing because she was now butt up against me and well if you have ever sat in the bath with a beautiful woman the sensation of such touch is indescribable.

In the end this closeness brought a much delicate intimacy to Paige and I sitting together in the bath. I could see the freckles on her shoulders, and the vertebrae of her spine. I could see the shininess of her hair. I also saw that she had a rather bad sun burn. And as I poured cold water down her back it dripped off of her and onto the best of me.

While we sat in the bath, Paige's mother decided to shampoo both her daughter's hair and then at her Paige's insistence, mine as well. As her mother started on my hair I could feel Paige stand and could just barely see her step out of the bath. When I cleared the shampoo from my eyes Paige was nowhere to be seen and as I was rinsed and dried off I was silent and very self-conscious. "Relax dear," I remember Paige's mother saying, "I am a nurse. I have seen it all." By the time I was fully dressed Paige had reappeared in a bright yellow dress, her strawberry-blonde hair gathered into pony-tails, in the style of *Pippi Longstockings*. Her mother asked Paige to walk me home.

When we walked home, out her front door, then a turn to the right than a walk to the corner and an equal distance to the right to just in front of my house, we both thought to walk slowly and hand in hand. It was the first time I felt the softness of someone else's hand. As she walked next to me it was the first time I noticed the beauty of someone walking one step in front of another, lithe like a ballerina. When we got

in front of my house she suddenly turned to me and gave me a peck on the cheek. Then she turned-tail, swinging her pony-tails and bounded away as a bunny would. I swore I could see an angelic hallow around the strawberry-blond locks of Paige as she skipped happily back home.

As I close my eyes even today I can remember that moment, standing in the sun looking at her in her sunny yellow dress. For a young and naïve boy she was an astounding Aphrodite.

For the rest of that summer I had the most enjoyable visits with Paige. Paige was very much her own person. I remember her flexibility and the remarkable ease by which she did flips on the trampoline or did gymnastics and cart wheels, pony tails flying like *Pippi Longstockings*. I admired her daring, her sense of adventure and her *joie de vivre*. It was infectious!

She more than once danced ballet for me, pink tutu and all. Her Arabesque was perfect. She had all but perfected her jumps while on the trampoline. She even taught me how to lift her and one afternoon insisted that I join her in her dance. That afternoon she dressed me in light blue tights and a blue shirt so that we could stand in front of the grand mirror in her room together and make-believe she was dancing Swan Lake, Tchaikovsky playing in the background. I was barely able to lift her mind you so we improvised. But I remember guiding her around and around when she did her Arabesque, walking majestically as if I were a young Baryshnikov.

As I twirled Paige round and round I was reminded how beautiful the human form was. She was so perfect in her balance and her form, and so picturesque.

Paige was artistic in other ways. She was ambidextrous and could draw and write quite well. She was a year older than me and knew how to read better than I could and so I would take over my favorite book, the Time-Life book *The World of Leonardo* over with me and we had fun reading the book. She helped me learn many new words.

When Paige's mother was out, or was looking the other way, Paige would sometimes take out her mother's nursing books and we would also play medical detectives, learning about the human skeleton, and the major organs. And well, yes, the '*let's play doctor thing*' did come up, once when her friend was visiting. Her friend wanted to be the doctor, Paige her nursing assistant, leaving me to be ahem ... the patient. Like Paige, her friend was an only child. With Paige front and centre I knew I was in good hands and so I didn't mind.

Out came the nursing books. Off came my clothes and I scrambled up onto the bed, with Paige and her friends kneeling on the bed next to me. It was afternoon and the curtains were drawn. The overhead light was off and a lamp with a pink lampshade was on. It cast a soft circular glow across the room. The edge of the soft light was just where my belly button was and so the best of me was cast in a shadow. Paige knew what I looked like, but her friend had never seen a boy and his toys before and so in her there was a mix of fascination and trepidation in her eyes.

As I lay on Paige's bed I closed my eyes. As her friend had never seen a boy before and it rather shocked her. She thought the boy toys were rather monstrous and bounded off the bed, squealing at the top of her lungs. I opened my eyes and saw that her friend had her back to the wall and was looking away with her eyes closed, and had her open hands at arm's length, shielding herself from the view.

Paige looked into my eyes and I looked into her eyes and we both started to giggle. Her friend slowly opened her eyes, turned to face us and started to regain her composure. She did not get back onto the bed mind you. Instead she stood at the foot of the bed. So Paige got off the bed and walked over and stood beside her friend. I just closed my eyes. I listened closely to what the two of them chatted about. It was almost as if I had become part of the furniture.

Paige's explanation of the where-with-all-of-things was both funny and fascinating and was enough to set her friend's mind at ease. After a few minutes, as I lay there with my eyes closed I felt a warm finger just touch the best of me and I opened my eyes to see her friend carefully tapping, as one might tap a pendulum. Perhaps I should have kept my eyes closed then perhaps I would have remained inanimate furniture in her eyes but, when she saw me looking at her she became self-conscious and drew back her hand and just stood there, transfixed. Then she turned away.

When my 'doctoring' was over I did not say a word but just got myself dressed and stood beside them at the foot of the bed. There was me, then Paige then her friend. We looked back at the indentation that I left behind on the bed, which looked like a grotesque smile. There was an awkward silence.

Paige looked over at her friend and without asking, her friend walked to the side of the bed, took off her dress, and under things, and laid there, legs together and arms tucked close beside her body. Then Paige and I just stood at the foot of the bed with another somewhat different explanation of the where-with-all-of-things. I could see that her friend's eyes were also closed and it was having a somewhat similar effect on her. What sprung forth was more subtle, mind you, but it was evident none-the-

less. She had laid herself within the circle of the soft light and so it cast a small shadow, that pink pageantry of the female homologue to maleness. In my fascination I slowly walked over to the side of the bed and leaned across and softly touched it with my little pinky. It was about the same size as the tip of my little pinky finger.

The effect was electric! Paige's friend began to squirm and giggle uncontrollably, so I stopped. Her eyes opened with a start. Judging by her look of disappointment I knew instinctively and immediately that she really did not want me to stop tickling the best of her, so I unhurriedly just ran my pinky finger back and forth across that fascinating little swelling, slowly at first, then more and more rapidly. As I did this her hands balled into fists and she brought her knees tighter together. This lifted her Delta of Venus upwards and the lips spread like petals on a flower. It was the most amazing sight. This sort of pleasure was all undiscovered country ... not only for me but for the two girls there as well.

She must of reached a climax or something because she sort of gushed and left a little puddle in the centre of the bed sheets. When she did this I stopped and her breathing took two or three minutes to go back to normal. Then she sat up on the bed and gathered herself into a ball, wrapping her arms around her legs just below the knees. She had her eyes closed and she rocked back and forth, humming to herself. It was almost as if she was alone in her own world. She kept her eyes closed and smiled. She was an Aphrodite after her indulgence. I looked at Paige and she looked at me and I decided it was time for me to leave.

I never again met her friend but the next time Paige and I got together she said her friend wanted to thank me "*for making her feel so happy.*" Paige would also tell me

that her friend took to playing doctor with some of the boys she knew. Today as I write this I am all smiles to think that her friend is probably the mother of several children – *would she still think it monstrous?* Wouldn't it be funny if her children were all boys?

That fall I was sad when Paige and her family moved so that her father could be closer to his business clients. Paige was very sad to lose one of her closest friends, but what are children to do when their adults make the choices? "Don't worry dear," I remember her mother saying to Paige, "you'll make new friends." It hit me rather hard because once again I was losing a close friend, but I was mindful that this time my friend was moving away, instead of moving on.

The day she left it was raining. I waited until the last possible moment to go over to her house to say good bye. As a rite of friendship we both snuck out of the now empty house out into the now empty back yard, and ran around in circles under the rain, like the first time we met. I followed behind her, admiring her grace and beauty.

As we ran in circles Paige sang me a song that I had never heard before.

*Rain, Rain go away
Come back another day
'cause little Paige she wants to play*

*Rain, Rain go to Spain
And never come back again.
'cause little Paige she wants to play*

The rain on our faces hide her tears and mine. When her mother called her back into the house we hugged for the last time and then she had to go in and I had to walk home. I left by the back gate and walked the alley. I didn't go straight home but walked the long way around the block. When I returned to in front of Paige's house the moving truck and their family car were gone. This was the second time my heart had been shattered by a mighty Aphrodite.

When I got home my mother was so angry I was drenched to the bone, but I hardly noticed this. I was too sad to notice. Off came my soaking clothes as my mother poured me a warm bath. As I sat in the bath I closed my eyes and remembered the day that Paige and I had sat in her bath together. There are not too many friends like that in life. You are probably wondering more about Paige and I. I won't reveal much more than to say that our short friendship was a very, very happy one. Although I never took biology in high school, because of Paige and her mother's nursing books I know a great deal about life, and the birds and the bees! Even today when I see or hear someone's name is Paige, if she is the right age, I always ask "*did you grow up in ... ?*"

[Vancouver] Recently I was asked to write about the darker side of love in art for an art history course. I chose to write about one of the iconic paintings of the 20th century. One of the most remarkable and controversial paintings of the last century was the 1907 painting by Pablo Picasso known as *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)* now hanging in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The painting represents the darker side of love in art.



Les Femmes d'Alger, Pablo Picasso, 1907 (MOMA)

Picasso himself called the painting *Le Bordel* because of the subject matter, which is that of five young nude prostitutes in several provocative figurative poses. The painting represents an artistic commentary by the artist who himself visited the many interesting brothels of France, including the brothels in Avignon.

The 2.44 m x 2.34 m oil painting is done in a primitive cubist style with raw colours and has no set perspective. This is one of the first monumental paintings done in the cubist style. In and above the subject matter, in painting this work of art Picasso abandoned perspective and rendered a large scale painting in a radical fashion.

The faces or visages of the five young women run the gamut (left to right) of representation to African primitive. The Venus of Delta is evident in several of the figures, however without defining features. The breasts of four of the five figures are evident, with the right hand women sitting showing her back and backside to the viewer.

Two of the five prostitutes peer menacing at the viewer (the two women on the right hand side of the painting). Several of the women are rendered with cubist body shapes. The three figures on the left have facial expressions that reflect the Picasso's Iberian style, while the two on the right are shown with primitive mask faces.

Prostitution was hardly a new topic for European painters. For instance there is Francois Boucher's famous 1753 painting of Miss Murphy who was a famous concubine.



Miss Murphy, Francois Boucher, 1753

This 18th century French painting was done at the request of the patron of Miss Murphy, the King of France. It does not show much of the figure of Miss Murphy but the rosy hue to her skin incites a heightened sense of imagination.

Two 19th century paintings on the subject of prostitution and the darker side of love in art are *Olympia* and *Dejeuner sur l'Herbe* both by the French Impressionist painter Edouard Manet.



Olympia, Edouard Manet, 1865 (Musee d'Orsay)

In this painting, Olympia is a famous concubine of the time and she looks out at the viewer in a resigned sense, painting the men in the audience as her patrons. Much of her figure is evident with her hand modestly placed across her femininity. You notice she is blushing, acknowledging that she is being viewed not as a work of art but as a woman who works another art, that of the prostitute.

Another painting that deals with the pleasures of the flesh is *Dejeuner sur l'Herbe*



Dejeuner sur l'Herbe, Eduoard Manet, 1863 (Musee d'Orsay)

This painting is subtle in its message and can be seen in many different ways.

How is Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* so different from other paintings about prostitution? It is because the painter Picasso is so different from his compatriots. It is in his nature to shock and he does this time and time again. There are only a few paintings that shock as much as Picasso aims to do, such as Gustave Courbet's painting *L'Origine de la Monde* and Orlan's 1989 spoof of Courbet, *L'Origine de la Guerre* with a male model (modesty prevents me from including these two works of art in my essay). Courbet's painting, which depicts a close-up view of the genitals and abdomen of a naked woman, shocked the Parisian artworld when it was first unveiled in 1866, around the time that Eduoard Manet was showing his two paintings. We now know that an actual model sat for *L'Origine de la Monde* and

that the model was a ballet dancer named Constance Queniaux. Picasso knew of and studied the artwork of Manet and Courbet.

For Picasso he would continue to shock after unveiling *Les Femmes d'Alger*. For instance he had his Minotaur series from the 1930's which Picasso admits was a self-portrait of his angst and appetites.



Minotaur and Sleeping Woman, Picasso



Minotaur as Bacchanal, Picasso

He had a love / hate relationship with woman, sometimes seeing them as goddesses and sometime not. He had many lovers in his life and fathered several children. He could not walk past a pretty woman without stopping to flirt with them. There are several books about Picasso and a famous movie *Life with Picasso*, based on a book by one of his lovers.

Some art historians have suggested that Pablo Picasso had a rather large libido and a certain misogynist side to him. You can sometimes see that in his art. For instance how else can one interpret his *Le Minotaur et la Femme*?



Le Minotaure et la Femme, Picasso

You can sense in his 1907 painting of a brothel in Avignon that Picasso's had both an appetite and an angst that reflected his view of women as goddesses and as concubine, and that his art from time to reflected the darker side to art.

When I was a very young girl I fell in love with ballet. For my sixth birthday my mother gave me a nice pink tutu and ballet shoes and took me to Tchaikovsky's *Nut Cracker* for Christmas. Then in the spring she enrolled me in a ballet school for the summer. I could not wait for summer to come.

My first day at the ballet school was magical. My ballet teacher was a Russian lady named Ekaterina. She was a thin and high strung woman who played the piano for us as we danced. But she was also very strict and a perfectionist. My summer class was for an entire month but by the end of the second day my feet hurt and I found myself unhappy because I could never do anything right for my ballet teacher. By the end of the first week I wanted to quit ballet altogether.

On Saturday morning I decided to go out and play in the sun in my back yard. My friend Patrick came over. He asked me how my ballet was coming and I put on a brave face. Together we both danced around and around like we were in a ballet. My father had cut the grass earlier that morning before going to work and while we ran around and around the dust and dry grass had started to form a thick cloud. Then he started to cough and wheeze. I did not know it but Patrick had asthma.

My mother, who was a nurse, was at home at the time and so I ran in to get her and she carried him into our kitchen and tried to calm him down. But he continued to cough and wheeze and so my mother decided to put him into a cold bath before phoning his mother. And so she did and then told me to watch over him in the bath tub as she went to use the telephone.

I sat on the edge of the bathtub. I felt funny watching him. I had never seen what a boy looked like before and he did not know I could see his boy bits. But still he continued to cough and wheeze. I don't know why but I suddenly felt very worried for him and decided I would get in the bath to comfort him. So I took off my bathing suit and started to climb into the bath and as he looked up at me he suddenly stopped coughing and wheezing.

I must have looked funny for my sun burn left my arms and legs red and the rest of my quite white. But I noticed he wasn't looking at that. I wondered if he had ever seen a girl before. Probably not. Patrick was now quite red but it wasn't because of a sun burn, or because of his asthma. He was blushing all over. I sat down in the bath with a splash and he giggled.

Just then my mother came back into the bathroom "No one answered the phone," she said and found us together in the bath tub. Then my mother got very angry at me and told me to 'turn around!' I don't know why she was so upset for my father use to take me into the bath with him when I was three or four and so this wasn't the first time I had shared a bath before.

I knew my mother was about to order me out of the bath so I asked her "mummy will you wash my hair?" My hair was full of grass and dust so how could she say no. And so she washed my hair and when she was finished I asked her to wash Patrick's hair too. And as she washed his hair I got out of the bath, dried myself and ran into my room.

By the time Patrick's hair was washed and he was dried and back into his clothes I had put on my tutu and dancing shoes and wanted very much for him to watch me

dance. I tingled and felt strange in a happy sort of way and my feet didn't hurt as much anymore and well, I once again wanted to dance ballet.

So into the living room we went and I put on a record and I started to dance about as best I could without bumping into our living room furniture. It wasn't so much dancing I was doing but different kinds of ballet poses for him, like some I had seen in Tchaikovsky's Nut Cracker. I felt so light and alive that I asked him to hold me and it was then that I had one of my first times.

For us girls we will tell you how important our first times are ... our first crushes, our first kisses and well ... when we lose our virginity. These moments would come much later in my life for me, all except my first crush.

It was one small step in my life but that Saturday afternoon when I asked Patrick to hold me close, I stood point on my toes for the first time.

That was the day I became a ballerina.

I first met Aoi (not her real name) three years ago at a summer English conversation gathering in Vancouver. The way we first met told me something about her. She noticed that everyone around me was drinking coffee except me. She liked tea and so that is why she sat next to me. I got her the same tea I was drinking, a variety known as Parisienne.

The moment she spoke it was evident she was well educated and was also well traveled. She liked the tea. ‘It was neither too sweet nor too bitter,’ she said. She spoke English well, without having much trouble pronouncing her r’s, much better than someone who has just studied English a few hours a week in high school. “I like watching films, not American films, but British ones.” She was twenty six at the time we first met and established in her professional career.

It took her a few minutes to admit what was clearly evident. Aoi was sad. She was hoping to find a new boyfriend and settle down. After three years her fiancé had told her a few weeks ago that he did not want to marry her. They had broken up, and quite badly. He was a middle manager for one of the big car companies. She worked in administration for one of the companies providing CNC machinery for the Japanese automobile manufacturers. Her company was in fact the largest of its kind in the world, a consortium with a large European CNC company, and as well known in industrial circles as any of the Japanese car manufacturers that used these CNC machines. By the way CNC means computer, numerical control.

Aoi had come to Vancouver to try to lift her spirits and to get on with her life.

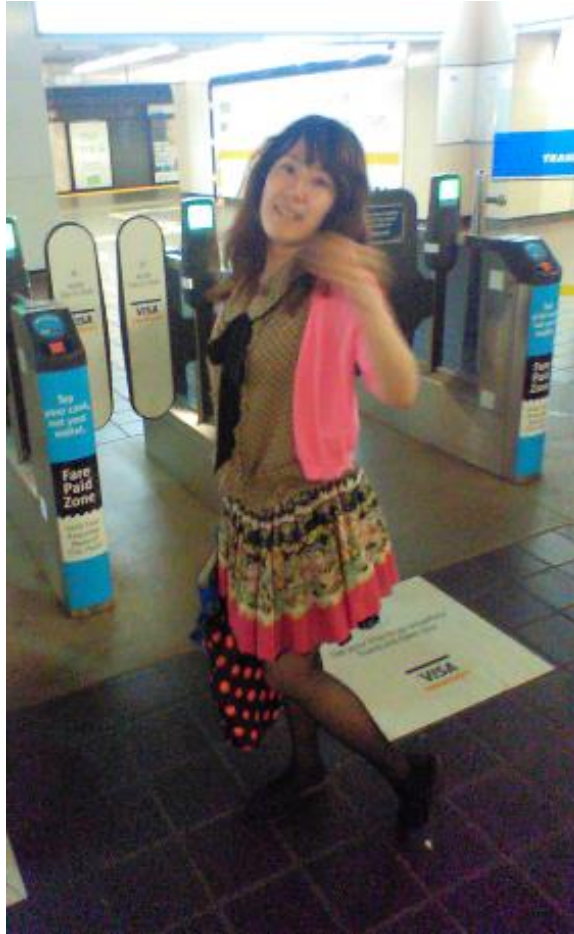
The first time we met we spoke about our interests and she seemed to find something comforting in me. The second time we met she asked about my life and I told her a bit about me. I am somewhat older than she is and had been married and divorced. I told her I knew sadness first hand. For the remainder of her visit to Vancouver she wanted to meet up with me to walk and chat about life. This was her first visit to Vancouver and she enjoyed the city.

Over the last ten days of her two week visit Aoi and I met three times, she contacting me and asking me to meet up. I sensed she had set out on her trip to Vancouver to meet other men. I encouraged her to do so. She had the number of a few of the boys from the conversation gathering, but she told me all they wanted to do was “to kiss, cuddle and get into my panties.”

She was much more outspoken then most Japanese woman I had met in the past. Perhaps this is why I found her such an interesting person and befriended her.

When I better understood her sadness I told her the story that my grandmother had told me when I was sad about my then marriage – the story was about my grandmother’s three boyfriends, and how she chose my grandfather, a serious young man, over a man with several young children who had lost his wife to ill health (probably overwork) and a playboy with a reputation as a rake (who died in a car crash a year later). She liked the idea of having several boyfriends.

Aoi had dressed up in color the last time we met up on her first visit and she was a great deal happier than when we had first met.



In fact as she bid me farewell she smiled and said ‘why stop at five?’



She asked me if I could be one of her five boyfriends? I smiled and nodded.



She blushed. Then and there I thought ... yes Aoi will be fine.

We kept in touch by email. I would get a message from her twice a month. I would wait a few days to answer her. Sometimes it is important not to appear too eager.

Inevitably I would ask her how her quest for boyfriends was going along? She would equivocate. Her professional life was so busy she said she was... 'too tired to go out.' After three months she finally went out on a date to a film and dinner with a man she had known since high school, but it was a disaster. He had a reputation as a playboy, and she was too timid and well they mixed, in her own worlds, 'like oil and water ...'

Things were not going well for her, so she decided that December to visit Vancouver again. I had become a sort of sage for her, which I found somewhat knotty because I was anything but sage when it comes to understanding women. My heart had been broken so many times it was held together by thin pieces of string. But I guess she wanted a male outlook to finding a wife. But hereto life had been a disaster for me.

It was hard to put into words how I felt about all this so I decided to take a page out of Picasso's book and paint her a painting with a message. I chose Lucky Kitty as the theme. When she returned to Vancouver I invited her to visit my Atelier, for afternoon tea, which she did with a friends.



The first version of *Lucky Kitty* painting was waiting for her on the easel.



I had painted three very aroused male cats and a new born kitten at her feet. The fact that *Lucky Kitty* was female was also clearly evident. I offered the *Lucky Kitty* painting to her ‘to take home and hang on her wall to encourage her in her quest for boyfriends...’ but she told me that she still lived at home with her parents and younger sister and such a message would ‘cause a scandal and not be allowed’ by her mother.’ So it has sat turned to the wall in the Atelier for the past two years.

A few days later we went to a night time German Christmas fair which Aoi had heard about. We both had a wonderful time milling about the exhibits.

I could see she was happy to be back here in Vancouver over Christmas and to spend time with me.



But her happiness seemed fleeting.

Before Aoi left Vancouver she wanted me to come with her as she met up with an ‘old boyfriend’ together going for a walking visit to Lynn Canyon Park. Her ‘old boyfriend’ had brought along his latest main squeeze as he described her and it was a bit of a circus. He (let me call him Bob) had not told his main squeeze (I think her name was Maria, a warm hearted and photogenic Mexican girl) what they would be doing that afternoon and so she had dressed fashionably but not warm enough for the occasion. He was wearing a warm winter coat which he did not share with Maria. Maria had a dress on with short sleeves. While the sun was out she was brave but as the afternoon sun started to disappear she started to shiver.

I offered the poor, shivering Maria my jacket, which she gladly wore. I had made a friend for life. The dynamics were very interesting as we waited for the bus home on Lynn Valley road. Something was indeed going on there between the Bob, Maria and Aoi. I was in the center of a triangle ... *une mélange a trios* (pas ménage!)

I was interested to see how this would play out so I invited them to dinner in a fancy Italian restaurant at the bottom of Lonsdale not too far from the Sea Bus Station.

It was an strange dinner to say the least. Bob sat opposite Aoi and I sat opposite to Maria. Maria and I talked films all dinner. Bob and Aoi talked about relationships. When Aoi started to get heated over something I softly placed my hand on her back and she pushed me away with her hand.

Aha ... I thought ... something had happened between Bob and Aoi the first time she was in Vancouver. I did not ask her what this was. And honestly I did not want to ask. But still I wanted to know ...

On a small piece of paper I wrote out some films I recommended for Maria, films like *Charade* with Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant, and the Science Fiction film *Fifth Element*, and I said loudly I would add my email to the bottom of the paper if she thought of any films she might recommend to me to watch. Maria blushed and grabbed the paper and stuffed it in the front of her bra. That got Maria an immediate look of scorn from both Aoi and Bob. After dinner Bob had still not offered Maria her coat and instead walked to the Sea Bus with Aoi.

Poor old Maria ... I never heard from her again, but that's understandable. She probably wanted to get as far away from Bob and his entourage as possible. And

besides she could talk film with almost anyone. I would have enjoyed meeting up with Maria simply because my artistic eye admired beauty and she would have made *une odalisque fantastique*!

To be able to take a trip to Vancouver Aoi had made arrangements for her company to let her come to take an English language course. The next time we met up it was in a convenient place for her to sit and work on her English homework. We met in the food court at Pacific Center, a rather noisy and bustling place, given that it was the Christmas season.

But Aoi needed to be in a public place for the small drama that was about to be played out. Quite out of the blue she asked me ‘why men were so promiscuous?’ I could not help laughing.

“It is in our nature,” I said. “It is hard for men to be monogamous.”

There was an awkward silence which I broke. “Did you study biology in high school?”

“Of course, we all have to.”

I smiled. “I didn’t take biology in high school.”

“Oh.” She smirked.

“I am still pretty naïve when it comes to the birds and the bees.”

“Birds and Bees?”

“I am pretty naïve when it comes to sex ...” I whispered this to her and she gave me an impish grin.

“I am probably not the person to ask about promiscuity. I am Catholic and appreciate the difference between love and lust ...

She went silent. Perhaps she was expecting a different answer from me? I wondered if she was asking me to share a bed with her? Obviously my answer left her at a disadvantage. So she took a different tact with me. “In Nepal the women can have many husbands.”

“I didn’t know that.” I decided to tease Aoi and see where this would take us. “The women in Nepal must be very happy with their lives!” She talked awhile about how it would be nice if this were allowed in Japan.

After a few minutes I decided to tell Aoi the story of Anais Nin and her many trysts. She had never heard about Anais Nin, so I decided to also tell Aoi about Anais Nin’s two husbands, one on the East coast of the US and the other on the West Coast. ‘So you see, not only men are promiscuous ...’ I said to her, ‘but it takes a special type of women to have several husbands.’

Boldly Aoi stated “it is one thing to have many boyfriends ... but I want several husbands!” And she was serious! From that moment onwards I would inquire of her how her search for ... her husbandswas coming along.”

After her visit to Vancouver she went on a business trip to Europe to confer with her European Consortium members. When she returned home to Tokyo she was reassigned ... exiled as she described it to me ... from Tokyo to Nagoya for a few months.

At the start of her 'exile' as she described it she was sad, but I told her that now that she was living in an apartment by herself she could go out more often and come in much later and perhaps find her husbands.

When she returned to Tokyo she took up her own apartment and went out several times a week with prospective husbands.

Recently I received wonderful news. She had found a husband. I was very happy for Aoi. But I wondered if she would truly settle down?

For certain I knew it was time to repaint *Lucky Kitty*. I would eventually do three versions. The first is one of traditional monogamy (here on the easel)



I had painted out two of the three amorous cats, as well as the background. You may have noticed Mount Fuji is now gone. But this was too allegorical don't you think. So I let this canvas sit for awhile.

Then I thought what would the painting look like if there was only her with a horizontal background?



But something is still missing, don't you think?

This past week I painted its final presentation.

I borrowed a theme from a Renaissance painting by Botticelli.

Everything is in balance now don't you think? And the message is clear...



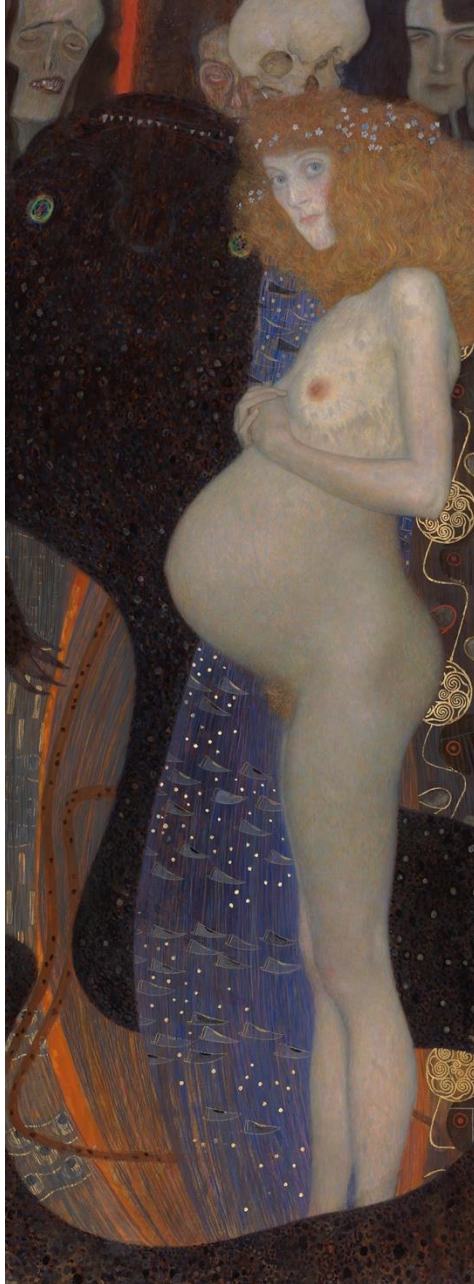
Maybe Aoi will now hang *Lucky Kitty* on her wall?

[New York] I have to admit I am a great admirer of the artwork of the Austrian artist Gustav Klimt. Over the past twenty years I have seen a number of his paintings and sketches in museums and galleries across Europe and North America.

One of my favorite pieces is the painting *Hope I* which hangs in the National Gallery of Canada (Gustav Klimt, 1903, oil on canvas, 1.89 m x 0.67 m). It is a painting of a red haired woman, expecting a child and perhaps a handful of days from giving birth. The shape of her tummy is both realistic and comical, as is her expression. The woman is in the profile and she stands to one side of a background that is both dark and worrisome. It is a painting of one of Klimt's love interests as she awaits the birth of their illegitimate child.

When you stand back from this painting the skin of the woman appears soft. As you step closer to the painting the layer past the skin of the woman begins to shimmer with colors ... indigo and the like. This was done by Klimt in an effort to bring the painting to life.

In her hair there are '*forget me nots*' which are flowers which symbolize true love, faithfulness and memories. There is poignancy to such a message for it is hard to gauge for certain the age of the woman in the painting. The model may in fact be in her late teens or early twenties. The way she holds her hands over her stomach is a shy and intimate gesture, as if the viewer is a voyeur to her state of being.



Hope 1 (Nat. Gal. Canada)

The model for this painting was Herma, one of Gustav Klimt's favorite models. When it came to figurative art, Gustav Klimt had a fetish for red haired models. Herma had sat for Klimt on and off in 1902-03 and then disappeared for some month.

When Klimt heard she was ill, he sought her out he found her wrapped up in her bed and well along in her pregnancy. That very instance Klimt dragged her out of the comfort of her bed and to his studio and set her up on the pedestal in his cold studio where she stood, naked and vulnerable as he painted her in the nude. One must wonder whether the underlying colors of her skin represents the frigid atmosphere in Klimt's studio. It may seem a harsh thing to do but in fact it was a statement on his part that he was not about to abandon Herma and her child.

When this paintings was first shown in 1909, some six years after its completion, it caused a scandal in that it was one of the first times a pregnant, nude women was portrayed in a life sized painting. Although he completed the painting in 1903 to coincide with the birth of one of his illegitimate children with Herma (a daughter) Gustave Klimt chose to not show this work to the public until the Second Vienna Kunstschau in 1909.

In another of his famous paintings we find Danae (Gustav Klimt, 1907, Gallerie Wuhle, Vienna, 0.77 x 0.83 m) being impregnated by Jupiter. Painted in 1907 it appears to be the very same model Herma as she begins her pregnancy.



Danae (Gallerie Wuhle, Vienna)

This painting is based on a series of drawings done by Klimt in the period 1903 to 1907. Many of these preliminary sketches borrowed ideas from drawings by Klimt's contemporary Egon Schiele.

As a symbolic theme the impregnation of Danaë was a popular subject in the early 1900s for many avant garde artists. Danaë was used as the quintessential symbol of divine love, and transcendence. Her story comes from classical mythology. As a virgin princess, when while she was locked by her father, King of Argos, in a tower of bronze, the chaste Danaë was visited and seduced by Zeus.

In Klimt's painting she is being impregnated which is symbolized as the golden rain flowing between her legs. To remind us of her royal lineage, Danaë is curled in a

royal purple veil in Klimt's painting. It is apparent from her face that Danaë is enjoying her fate and is aroused, and almost orgasmic as the golden stream enters her from above. From this seduction Danaë would bare Zeus a son, Perseus who would go on to slay the Gorgon witch Medusa and to later rescue Andromeda from the sea monster.

In a modern tribute to Gustav Klimt the Austrian photographer Inge Prader has set many of his paintings as *tableau vivant*, or living canvas with live models, grand and elaborate stage settings and actual gold to reflect Klimt's own artistic sensibilities.

Inge Prader has set a half dozen of Klimt's grand works as *tableau vivant*, most with four or more artist's model. However in Prader's only Klimt rendition with a single model, that of his 1907 painting Danaë, we find a less than earnest effort than is found in Inge Prader's more elaborate rendering.

This photograph leaves me somewhat disappointed. That having been said, it still serves to remind us that many of Klimt's paintings are about the realities of life, and of death.

What better way of reminding us of this but in *Art Nouveau à la Klimt* ... with live models.



Danaë (Inge Prader)

In viewing both the painting and the tableau vivant of Danaë I am reminded of a poem I read a few years back titled *On Viewing Danaë for the First Time* by the Canadian poet Patrick Bruskiewich ...

On Viewing Klimt's Danaë for the First Time

It was hard-on the first view
not to imagine a story behind
the painting. It was in Klimt's
studio that they first met –
a pfenning muse amongst the
amusing naked models – tall

ones, short ones, chubby ones,
some bossoms more bountiful
than others, thin ones too, some
too young to admit, no hags
or rags here, just beautiful women
waiting to be immortalized. There
were blondes, brunettes and red
heads – Gustav loved red
heads – her name was Molly
and she was a dish. It was not
just the hair on her head
he adored, but the fiery red
in that other private place that
fixated his amorous loins
and drove his art, much more
than his heart. He sketched her,
then mollified her in a painting
of divine rape – if there was
such a thing. For no longer was
Gustav a mere artist but a God,
And she not a mere moll but a diva.
Between her loins he set the molasses
Of him, for it could not be golden
Given his sickly state – Vienna
Had been too kind to him!
But no matter, she felt mollitious,
having dashed from one state of

bliss to another across Europa.
She was, after all, a plain and simple
woman – but Gustav painted her
with mollescent divinity, he her
Jupiter and she soon to give
life to their Perseid, a star
that fell from heaven, a
daughter. His love towards
her was mollitious, for he was
after all a mollusk. While
she was with child Jupiter
was off with Venus, in some other
sacred place. But Danae was
used to being mollycoddle and so
coddle her he did, her and their
mollymawk, red hair as well.

As I stood before this painting
It was hard-on viewing Klimt's Danae
For the first time – not to fall
Completely and utterly in love,
And wonder what became of them both ...

I once read Bertrand Russell's superb essay *What I have Lived For*. In his unique essay he writes of the three passions in his life; his longing for love, his search for knowledge and his concern for human suffering. Unlike Russell, however, I am neither a philosopher nor a Nobel Prize winner in literature. I am just a common man with my common interests.

I love potatoes. They taste so good, either by themselves, or prepared in so many ways. Eating potatoes each day keeps the doctor away. Did you know that potatoes contain so many vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C. They help to bring meaning to my life. There are many reasons why I like them, but let me share with you four of the best reasons why.

You can boil them, and then mash them. Mashing is so good for dealing with life's angst. If you are still restive, just add a pinch of salt. If you are still unsatisfied, then what about a dollop of butter? If you are French then add Crème Fraiche. If you are American than a cup of milk should do. If you are Spanish or Italian, don't forget the minced garlic. If you are British, then eat them the way they were meant to be eaten, no salt, no butter, no Crème Fraiche. If you are Scottish or Irish, then there is your old grandmother's recipe with that secret ingredient (if I told you what it is, it would not be a secret would it). If you are Canadian just add everything and stir it in, and try to be all things to all people.

If you don't want to mash the beauty of the thing, then bake them in an oven. Roast them with the turkey or pot roast. Set them among the other vegetables, the onions, the squash, the beets and the yams, to bake to perfection. Lambast them with

drippings and let the crust harden, trapping the moisture and nutrition of the thing. Oh, and don't forget to wash them before you bake them. There is nothing like a baked potato, fresh from the oven, cut along its midriff, filled with butter, sour cream, chives and a pinch of celery or garlic salt. A baked potato is a pleasant feast for a starving peasant.

Then there is the slice and dice of life. I like to peel and slice potatoes and place them carefully atop a deluxe pizza, adding a dash of fennel seeds and some brie, making it supreme. When I have some free time, and my taste buds are craving it, I bake my own potato chips, adding a splash of cider vinegar and sea salt. Here's a quarter's worth of my time and of dry goods saving me a good four dollars from the grocery store – Ma Patrick's Kettle Chips. Very rarely do I Julienne potatoes and bake my own French Fries. To fry potatoes is a sin. That is a far too ignoble end for such a mighty treat. If it is cold outside it is time for potato soup, made with leeks and cream. Potato soup is best eaten hot 'n'est ce pas, *mais pas comme qu'il soit chez Vichy.*

And a good Martini will warm the cold cockles up, made with choice Polish Potato Vodka, after all the Poles invented Vodka, *Wodka Polski*. The only reason the Russians have tried to dominate the Poles for much of the last thousand years was to guarantee access to the best Vodka in the world, If you drop a pinch of pepper into *Wodka Polski*, the pepper will gather up the remaining oils that even the best brewer cannot get out. You might drink it the way that Winston Churchill drank his Martinis, so dry that all he would do is clink the side of the Martini wine bottle with his glass of spirits.

The best week of my life was perhaps the one just past, when I enjoyed 42 potatoes in seven days; three meals a day, with two potatoes each meal – six potatoes a day! This morning it was stir fried potatoes, beef hash and eggs. Lunch today was Cranberry Turkey medallions with roasted potato wedges. Dinner was two baked potatoes with garlic cloves roasted within their innards, with a side of Salad Nicoise with anchovies and homemade mayonnaise.

Six times seven ... forty two reasons that brings meaning to my life.

Ceci n'est pas ... (This is not ...) is a whimsical title of a genre of DaDaist art most famous for the piece *Ceci n'est pas un pipe*. This short submission is meant to pay homage to the DaDa Movement on its one-hundredth anniversary.

The DaDa Movement began as a moral and philosophical response to the horrors of the Great War (1914-1918). It is a movement that steps beyond surrealism and is meant to question the underlying precepts of human perception and philosophy. The DaDa movement included artists like ManRay and for a time Picasso and Dali. I have a small mixed media piece that puts one of my old pipes in front of a reproduction of the DaDa artwork *Ceci n'est pas un pipe* (this is not a pipe).

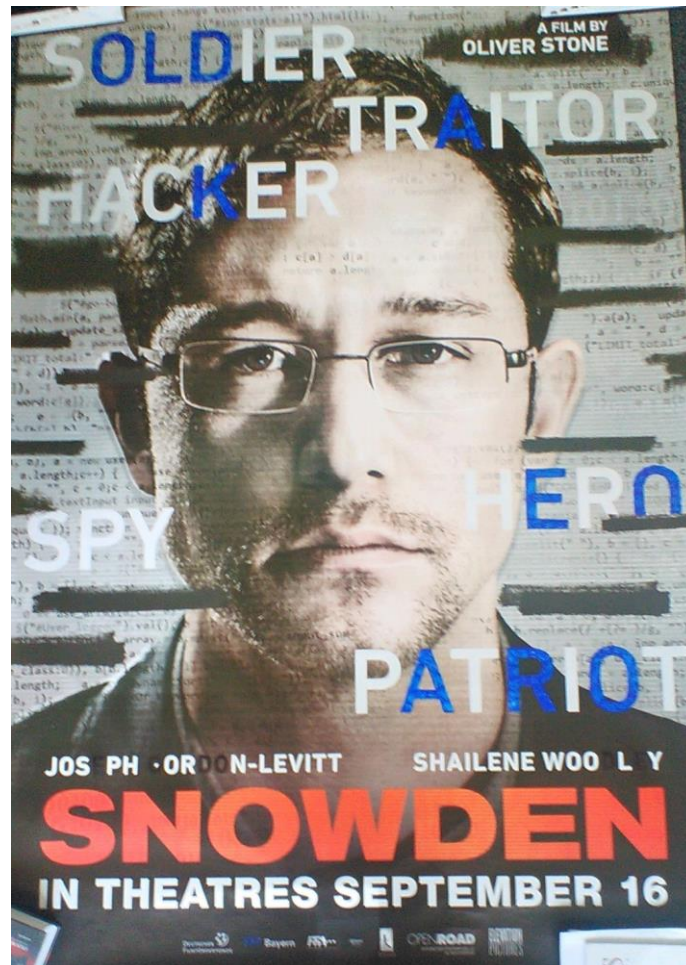


Ceci n'est pas un pipe ...



Ceci n'est pas une mouche ...

I have taken the poster from the 2017 Oliver Stone film *Snowden* and made it into a DaDa piece titled *Ceci n'est pas en clair – decode le* (this is not clear – decode it). There is a hidden message in the piece that the viewer needs to decode.



Ceci n'est pas en clair – decode le ...

You try to decipher: a a d e f f f k l o o r u

For the piece *Ceci n'est pas la logique* (This is not logical) I have borrowed artistic sensibilities from ver Meer, Picasso, Raphael, and Dali, as well as popular themes.



Ceci n'est pas la logique ...



Ceci n'est pas de camouflage ...

DaDa also applied to figurative pieces. *Ceci n'est pas un visage* ,

There are also DaDa artwork about the absence of images like in the case of the trees and their shadows, the shadow of the photographer, as well as the leaves on the sidewalk and their shadows *Ceci n'est pas une image*



Ceci n'est pas une image ...



Ceci n'est pas une odalisque ...



Ceci n'est pas un dessert ...



Ceci n'est pas une famille ...



Ceci n'est pas du travail ...



Ceci n'est pas une poupée ...



Ceci n'est pas une fleur ... mais une femme qui s'épanouir



Ceci n'est pas gentille ...



Ceci n'est pas la solitude ...



Ceci n'est pas Ophelia.



Ceci n'est pas une ange ...



Ceci n'est pas un oiseau



Ceci n'est pas un Matisse



Ceci n'est pas un Picasso ...



Ceci n'est pas possible...



Ceci n'est pas une sauvage ...



Ceci n'est pas une geante



Ceci n'est pas la musique ...



Ceci n'est pas la paradis ...



Ceci n'est pas une rouge



Ceci n'est pas une danse



Ceci n'est pas une femme habille ...



Ceci n'est pas des frères ..



Ceci n'est pas en couleurs ...



Ceci n'est pas en noir et blanc...



Ceci n'est pas un arbre



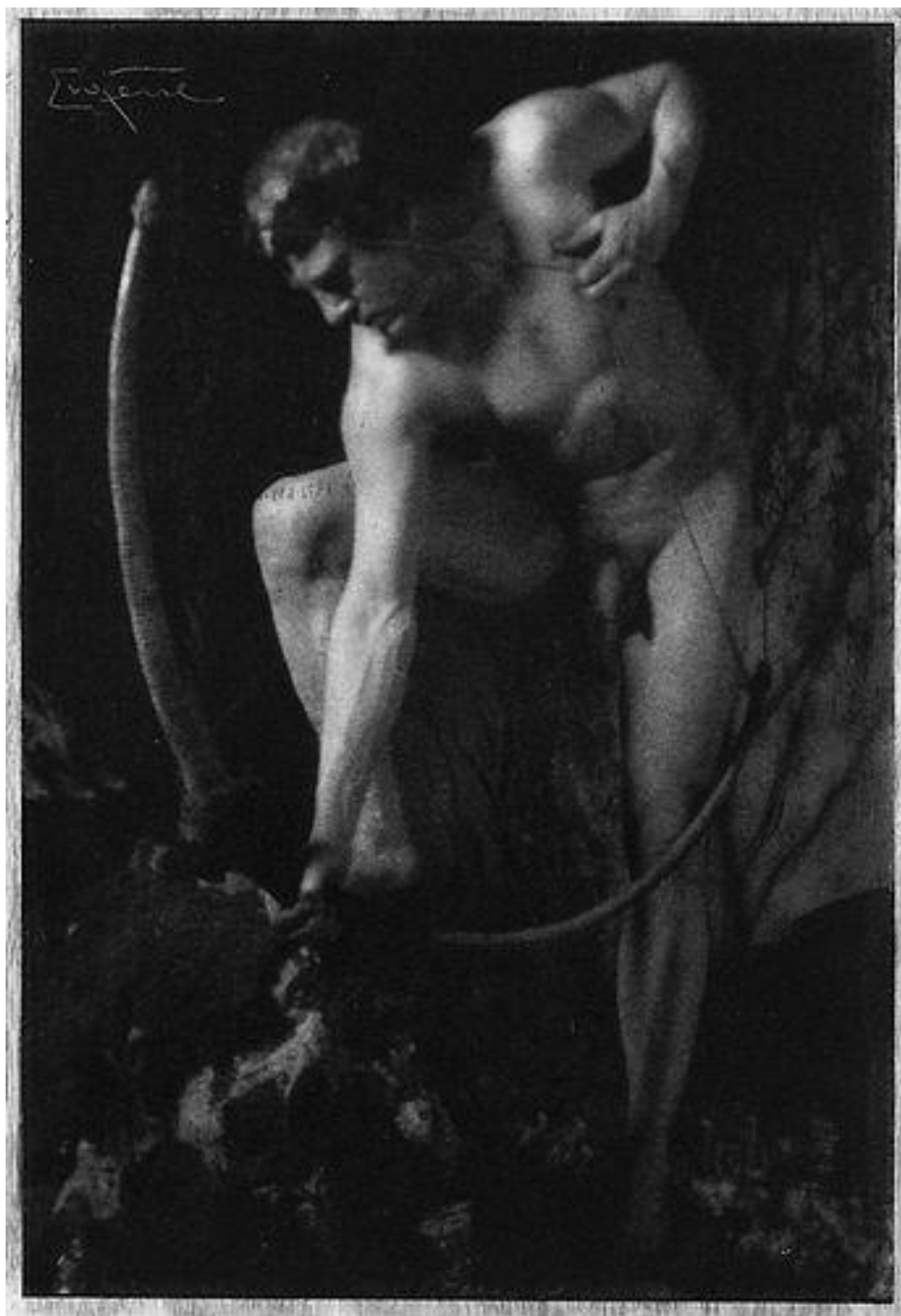
Ceci n'est pas une métaphore ...



Ceci n'est pas une séraphine ...



Ceci n'est pas Psyche ...



Ceci n'est pas Eros ...



Ceci n'est pas la realité ...



Ceci n'est pas une paonne ...



Ceci n'est pas la sexe ...



Ceci n'est pas la politique ...



Ceci n'est pas une mirage ...



Ceci n'est pas en balance ...



Ceci n'est pas une rose ...

